3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

CHAPTER XIII

CUSTOMS, MUSIC, POETRY AND FOLKLORE

" Il est peu de pays où la famille soit plus faiblement constituée que dans le Turkestan oriental et il y a bien longtemps que le mariage s'y conclut et s'y dissout avec une égale facilité. Il n'est peut-être pas une région en Asie où les mœurs soient plus relâchées et où, en même temps, les femmes aient plus d'indépendence et d'influence, où l'on rencontre à la fois moins de dignité et plus de douceur dans la vie privée."

GRENARD.

123 THE conditions of family life in the Tarim Basin and the manners and customs connected with the home are no less peculiar to this remote and isolated land than are its legends and superstitions. Thanks to the extra-territorial jurisdiction exercised by the British Consul-General, I had a considerable number of civil as well as criminal cases to settle according to the law and custom of the country, which were applicable not only when Chinese subjects were parties, but also in civil suits of all kinds brought by or against British Indian nationals permanently domiciled in Chinese Turkistan. In the course of many attempts to do some sort of justice in long and complicated cases concerning succession and bequest, marriage and divorce, chancery, settlement of accounts, and so on, I picked up a certain amount of information about the conditions and customs of family life, especially at Yarkand, whence most of the work came. I am also indebted to my friend, Murad Qari of Yarkand, whom I have already mentioned more than once, for much useful and interesting information relative to his native town.

165 Owing to ignorance and bad hygiene, infant mortality is undoubtedly very high, though it probably does not approach the appalling figures for Calcutta and some other parts of

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